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FROM ANMELDUNG → THEORIE → PRAXIS → FÜHRERSCHEIN

How to Get Your German Driving Licence (Führerschein)

A complete step-by-step guide to the process, the paperwork, and the real costs

Welcome! Getting your Führerschein in Germany can feel like a maze of paperwork, mandatory classes, and confusing fees — this guide breaks the whole journey down into clear, honest, step-by-step stages, from your first day at the Fahrschule to driving away with your licence, including what it should actually cost you.

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1 Vorbereitung		2 Theorie	3 Praxis & Prüfung		
■ What You Need		■ Key Steps		■ Duration	■ Total Cost
Fahrschule Sehtest Erste-Hilfe-Kurs Passport photos		Sign up → Theory classes → Theory exam → Practical hours → Practical exam		Theory: ~2-4 wks Practical: 2-6 mo Total: 3-6 months	€2,500 – €4,500 (up to €6,000 in big cities)

1. Why This Guide?

Getting a driving licence in Germany is not complicated, but it is easy to overpay or waste time if you don't know the order of things. The process is heavily regulated: a fixed number of theory lessons, a fixed number of "special drives," official fees set by TÜV/DEKRA, and a Fahrschule (driving school) that adds its own fees on top. This guide walks through every stage in order — Anmeldung, Sehtest, Erste-Hilfe-Kurs, Theorieunterricht, the theory exam, the practical hours, and the practical exam — with realistic 2026 costs and the small decisions that can save you real money and stress.

■ Stage	■ What Happens	■ Roughly How Long
Vorbereitung	Choose a Fahrschule, register, do the Sehtest and Erste-Hilfe-Kurs	1–2 weeks
Theorie	Attend mandatory theory classes, self-study, pass the theory exam	2–4 weeks
Praxis	Practical driving hours, 12 Sonderfahrten, practical exam	2–6 months

2. Step 1 – Choosing a Fahrschule & Registering

Every driving school in Germany is legally required to publish its price list, so compare at least 2–3 schools before signing up. Ask specifically for the "Grundbetrag" (base fee), the price per practical lesson, and the price per Sonderfahrt (special drive) — these vary the most between schools. You'll need your ID/passport, a biometric passport photo, and (if you already have a Meldebescheinigung) proof of address to register.

PRO TIP: Don't just compare the Grundbetrag. A school with a cheap base fee but expensive per-lesson rates can end up costing more overall once you add 25–50 practical hours. Ask for the full price list in writing before you sign anything.

Step 2 – The Sehtest (Eye Test)

A vision test at any optician or Sehteststelle is mandatory before you can be registered for a licence. It takes about 5 minutes and the certificate is valid for the whole application. Cost: roughly €7–15 (some opticians offer it for free as a promotion).

Step 3 – The Erste-Hilfe-Kurs (First Aid Course)

A first-aid course is compulsory and only needs to be done once in your lifetime (it's valid for every future licence class too). It normally runs as a single day of about 9 teaching units (roughly 6–7 hours, sometimes split into two half-days). The Red Cross (DRK), Johanniter, Malteser, and ASB all run these regularly in most towns. Cost: roughly €30–60.



3. Theory Classes (Theorieunterricht)

For a class B licence you must attend 14 mandatory "Doppelstunden" (double lessons) at the driving school — 12 general lessons ("Grundstoff") that are the same for every licence class, plus 2 lessons specific to class B ("Zusatzstoff"). Each double lesson is 90 minutes (2 x 45 min). Attendance is checked and logged; you cannot skip these.

■ Item	■ Detail
Total lessons	14 Doppelstunden (12 Grundstoff + 2 class-B Zusatzstoff)
Length per lesson	90 minutes
Typical schedule	Many schools run these as an intensive block — about 2 double lessons per evening over roughly 7–8 days. Others spread them over several weeks, 1–2 evenings a week.
Cost	Usually included in the Grundbetrag (€400–700, sometimes up to €950 depending on the region)

PRO TIP – Save on the learning app: Most driving schools try to sell you their own branded learning app or textbook bundle for around €70. You don't have to buy it there. A standalone theory app (for example iTheorie, Fahrschule24, or a DEKRA/TÜV-licensed app) with the full official question catalogue usually costs only €20–30 and covers exactly the same official questions. Just make sure it's updated for the current question catalogue before you buy.

4. How to Actually Prepare for the Theory Exam

The official catalogue has roughly 1,000 general questions plus about 200–300 class-B-specific questions. Random cramming wastes time — this order works much better:

- 1 First full pass:** Go through every question in the catalogue once, topic by topic, without worrying about your score. The goal is exposure, not mastery.
- 2 Save your mistakes:** Every time you get a question wrong, mark/save it (nearly every app has a "wrong answers" or "favourites" list for this).
- 3 Repeat only the saved questions:** Go through your saved/wrong-answer list again and again until you consistently get them right — this is far more efficient than repeating everything.
- 4 Do the numeric questions separately:** Braking-distance, stopping-distance, and other calculation questions need a different kind of practice. Use the app's dedicated "numeric questions" filter and drill these on their own.
- 5 Simulate the real exam:** In the last week, complete at least 20–30 full mock exams under real time conditions (30 questions, matching the real point system) until you're passing comfortably every time.

Exam format: The real theory exam has 30 questions worth up to 10 points each (basic + class-specific questions mixed in). You may make a maximum of 10 error points to pass. It's done on a tablet at a TÜV or DEKRA test centre, in German (or an approved foreign language/translation on request). Fee: roughly €22.50 (official) plus a Vorstellungsgebühr from your school of €50–100.



5. Practical Driving Hours & the Sonderfahrten

Once you've registered, you can actually start practical lessons before passing the theory exam — but you cannot take the practical exam until the theory exam is passed. On top of your normal practice lessons, the law requires exactly 12 special drives ("Sonderfahrten"), each 45 minutes:

■ Type	■ Required	■ What It Covers
Überlandfahrten (rural roads)	5 drives	Country roads, bends, overtaking on rural routes
Autobahnfahrten (motorway)	4 drives	Merging, lane changes, overtaking, rest stops
Nachtfahrten (night driving)	3 drives	Reduced visibility, glare, lighting

Beyond these 12 mandatory drives, most learners need somewhere between 25 and 50 normal practical lessons before their instructor certifies them as exam-ready — this varies a lot by individual progress, so don't compare your hour count to a friend's.

PRO TIP: Book at least one lesson a week, ideally two. Long gaps between lessons mean you re-learn things you'd already picked up, which quietly adds several (expensive) extra hours to your total.

6. Step Final – The Practical Exam (Praktische Prüfung)

- 1 Instructor sign-off:** Your driving instructor confirms you're ready and books the test date with TÜV/DEKRA.
- 2 The exam itself:** About 45 minutes of real-road driving with an official examiner in the back seat and your instructor in the front, testing normal traffic situations, parking, and general vehicle control.
- 3 Pass or Nachprüfung:** If you don't pass, you simply book another date — but you'll pay the exam fees again, so treat the first attempt seriously.
- 4 Your licence:** If you pass, you can usually drive away with a temporary confirmation immediately; the physical Führerschein card arrives by post within a few weeks.

Cost: Official practical exam fee is roughly €117, plus your school's Vorstellungsgebühr (they accompany you in their car) of €150–300. If you fail, both of these are usually payable again.



7. Full Cost Breakdown (Class B, 2026)

There's no fixed price for a German licence — it depends on your region, your school, and how many practical hours you personally need. Here's a realistic breakdown to budget against:

Item	Typical Range
Grundbetrag (registration + 14 theory lessons)	€400 – €700
Learning materials / theory app	€20 – €100
Sehtest (eye test)	€7 – €15
Erste-Hilfe-Kurs (first aid course)	€30 – €60
Passport photos	€10 – €20
Theory exam (official fee + Vorstellung)	€75 – €120
12 Sonderfahrten (5 rural + 4 motorway + 3 night)	€600 – €1,200
Normal practical lessons (25–50 x 45 min, €60–100 each)	€1,500 – €3,500
Practical exam (official fee + Vorstellung)	€300 – €500
Führerscheinantrag (licence application at the Straßenverkehrsamt)	€38 – €70
Typical total, class B	€2,500 – €4,500 (up to €6,000 in expensive regions)

Budget a buffer: If you fail the theory or practical exam, you pay the exam fees again. Most advisors recommend keeping an extra €500–1,000 in reserve on top of your planned budget.

8. Final Recommendations

- **Compare schools before signing up** – the per-lesson and Sonderfahrt prices matter more than the base fee.
- **Do the Erste-Hilfe-Kurs and Sehtest early** – they're quick, cheap, and needed before you can even register properly.
- **Buy your own theory app** instead of the school's bundle if it's much cheaper — the official question catalogue is the same everywhere.
- **Use the save-and-repeat method** for theory prep — it gets you exam-ready far faster than redoing the whole catalogue every time.
- **Book lessons consistently**, at least weekly, to avoid re-learning and extra costs.
- **Keep a cost buffer** of €500–1,000 in case a first attempt doesn't go your way.



(Viel Erfolg – good luck on the road!)

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Questions? Reach out on Instagram @MueeninGermany or via your favourite platform. Prices are approximate 2026 market ranges and vary by Bundesland and Fahrschule — always confirm current fees with your local driving school and Straßenverkehrsamt.